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NEWARK

“It hurts. A lot of memories, a lot of hard work
... now we don’t have any place to worship on Sunday.”

Dana Beals, deacon of the First Way of the Cross Church



Blaze ravages church’s interior



Dana Beals, top right, a deacon at the First Way of the Cross Church in Newark, talks about the Thanksgiving morning fire that heavily damaged the house of worship on Clinton Place. Photos by Patti Sapone, NJ Advance Media for The Star-Ledger

Deacon vows to reopen, despite lack of insurance

Karen Yi For The Star-Ledger

A Thanksgiving Day fire mangled the insides of the First Way of the Cross Church in Newark, leaving only blackened remnants of the lectern and burnt piles of debris.

“It hurts,” said Dana Beals, a deacon of the Clinton Place church. “A lot of memories, a lot of hard work ... now we don’t have any place to worship on Sunday.”

Police said the fire erupted shortly after 7 a.m. in the one-story church. It also caused minor exterior damage to a residential home next door.

Beals said no one was inside when the fire broke out, and the church had no planned events for the day. The Apostolic

church has been in the community since 1937, with Bishop Gerald Beals at the helm since 1995.

“I was disoriented,” Dana Beals, whose uncle is the bishop, said of hearing the news of the fire. “It was a shock because we were just here last night.”

He said his uncle, who is nicknamed Bishop McRough because of his tough exterior, was devastated. “This is his work. He has a heart for people, he has a passion,” Beals said. “It hurts me to see him hurt so bad.”

Hundreds of people attend each Sunday, Beals said. The South Ward church runs a hot-meals program every day to feed 25 to 30 people. But now the kitchen will have to

SEE CHURCH, 6

RETAIL

‘Black Friday has lost its luster’

With changing shopping habits, tradition is virtually meaningless, experts say

Abha Bhattacharai Washington Post

David McCombs has spent the past 10 Thanksgivings camped out in a Best Buy parking lot in central Alabama.

Each year, he and a rotating crew of friends have shown up days — sometimes a week — in advance and set up tents, couches and folding chairs to wait for the official start of the holiday shopping season. They played lacrosse, organized basketball tournaments and watched movies that they projected onto the side of the building. At night, they slept in sleeping bags and hammocks as they prepared for the year’s biggest competition: beating their neighbors to discounted door-busters.

But this fall, the local Best Buy closed — yet another casualty of Americans’ changing shopping habits — and brought the decadelong tradition to an end. Just as well, McCombs says. He’s doing more of his shopping online, too.

“Black Friday has lost its luster,” he said. “It’s just another day of sales now that you can buy everything online.”

SEE RETAIL, 4

WASHINGTON

A signal Flynn may cooperate in Russia probe

Lawyer stops working with Trump team, insiders say

Carol D. Leonnig and Rosalind S. Helderman Washington Post

A lawyer for former national security adviser Michael Flynn informed an attorney for President Donald Trump this week that he can no longer discuss the special counsel’s investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election, a sign that Flynn may be preparing to cooperate in the probe, people familiar with the investigation said.

The call from Flynn lawyer Robert Kelner to Trump attorney John Dowd came Wednesday evening and is a potentially ominous sign for Trump and other close associates to the president. Before this week, Kelner had been strategizing with lawyers for Trump, his son Donald Trump Jr. and his son-in-law Jared Kushner, among others.

The split suggests that Flynn, who has

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